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THE

HANDBOOK AND GUIDE

TO

Kirkstall Abbey;

COMPRISING

AN HISTORICAL, DESCRIPTIVE, AND IMAGINATIVE

POEM

IN SEVEN PARTS;

TO WHICH IS APPENDED A COMPENDIOUS

HISTORY OF THE ABBEY;

A

DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS;

AND

A GLOSSARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL TERMS.

BY

H. MARLES, L.R.C.P.,

AUTHOR OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR, &c., &c.

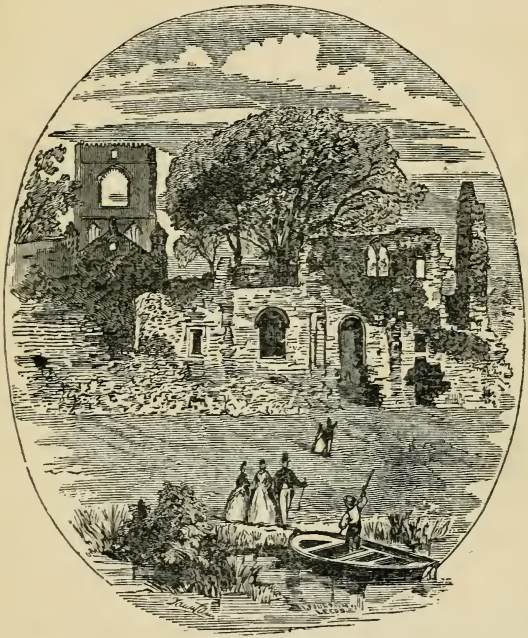
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1863.

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GUIDE TO KIRKSTALL ABBEY



BY H. MARLES, L.R.C.P.

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PREFACE.

NO apology can be required from an Author who endeavours to make the favorite holiday resort of a community more enchanting by encircling it with poetic thought. The only visits paid to the ruins by the writer were by *night* until the Poem had grown to the finishing stanza of the Sixth Part, when a minute inspection by day became necessary, both for the purpose of consistently bringing the Poem to its conclusion, and to ensure an accurate description of the ruins in prose, which, it is hoped, will be found sufficiently extended to prove interesting, instructive, and satisfactory to visitors.

In the Imaginative parts of the Poem nothing is introduced to wound the most sensitive; the Historical parts being well attested facts, take their tints and proportions from necessity; the Descriptive parts must speak for themselves.

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Every available source of information has been had recourse to for the purpose of supplying a condensed, but, as far as possible, complete HISTORY OF THE ABBEY; and it is anticipated that the Glossary will be found acceptable. The terms here introduced are arranged in alphabetical order for the convenience of the reader, and are intended to supply information of an interesting character which could better appear in this form than be incorporated with the History.

Altogether, this little Book is committed to the candour of a discerning public in the confident expectation of extensive patronage, as the Author *intended well*, whatever may be thought of the performance.

H. M.

5, CARDIGAN PLACE, KIRKSTALL ROAD,
LEEDS, APRIL, 1863.

Kirkstall Abbey.

PART I.

TIME—NEAR MIDNIGHT.

Thou solemn relic of a dark past age,
How grand in hoary majesty art thou—
Fain would I sketch thine image on my page,
With all the magic falling on thee now.

Thou standest like a giant, whom Old Time
Hath battled with, while ages swept away—
Slowly disjointed—with a march sublime
Crumble thy ruins, going to decay.

This is the hour for contemplating thee,
For darkness hovers over all around;
As in the age that gave thee birth, we see
But dimly, though we tread on holy ground.

How silent, and how awful is the hour,
As midnight stealthily the zenith gains;
How darkly seems to frown that ruin'd tow'r,
As it looks down upon these grim remains.

The spirit of past generations now
Comes like a phantom, borne on noiseless wings,
And hovering with a sad and solemn brow,
Moans out a song of past and hidden things.

I pass into a cloud, most dark and dense,
And dreamy figures all around me fly;
The past is present, and the feeble sense
Of vision brightens in my dubious eye.

If scenes of sad licentiousness, and guilt,
Such as to silence or to shame compel,
Since these grand columns and old walls were built,
Such as the trembling muse must fail to tell—

Yet tender grass grew here, and gloriously
Bright daisies mingled with the verdant green,
And Aire's old waters wandered to the sea,
When eye of man had never scann'd the scene.

There ancient trees in plenty rear'd their head,
Around them wintry winds had roar'd in vain,
They bore the mighty surges, laugh'd, and said—
When spring time comes we shall be green again.

Winter and spring, summer and autumn roll'd,
With ever-changing features, fast away;
And generations passed, although untold
Their joys and griefs, yet there the old trees stay.

Some of these oaks had from the acorn burst
When Mary's Son within the manger lay;
When minstrels' strains in sweetest songs rehears'd
The Son of God of woman born that day.

And rapidly they grew,—for when He paid
Our debts, and wrapt His glory in a shroud,
The sighing winds were hush'd, as if afraid
Of the dread weight beneath whose frown he bow'd.

And strange sad voices came in whispers low,
Frequent at midnight hour these trees among;
While Aire's smooth waters now were stealing slow,
Or swoll'n with wintry rains swept fast along.

All nature shows a sympathy sublime,
Each part with each—so ocean's waves accord
With the fierce winds, they fall and swell in time,
Thus forming nature's chorus, "PRAISE THE LORD!"

So, ere the trembling earth upheaves in pain,
Trav'ling to bring a mountain to the birth—
The surging waves lie sighing on the main,
As though they felt the fires within the earth.

So spirit meets with spirit—angel forms
With angels hold sweet converse—man with man;
And spirits mingle with the winds and storms,
Speaking prophetic language—Read who can.

Sometimes the mystic whispers louder grew,
And moaning, murmuring voices might be heard,
And silent wings about the darkness flew,
Though not a leaf was by their motion stirr'd.

Sometimes the moon would veil her silvery face
With sombre clouds, and fill with columns strange
The canopy that overhung the place,—
A temple meet for spirit wings to range.

It was a solemn and a sacred spot,
Where dreamy superstition felt a spell;
Which common places on the earth had not,
Therefore some Anchorites came here to dwell.

For far from hence the shepherd, Seleth, saw
Strange visions at the silent midnight hour,
Which filled his simple heart with holy awe,
And arm'd him with a superhuman pow'r.

The air was still about him, yet the trees
Were strangely stirred,—the yielding branches start
Asunder—falling on his trembling knees,
He heard a small still voice, "Seleth, depart!"

From off his feet his shoes the shepherd took,
In reverence bow'd his head, and said a pray'r;
And then he firmly grasp'd his simple crook,
To take his journey, but he knew not where.

The branches closed, 'twas darkness all around,
And still and solemn was that sylvan glade;
His soul was stirred within him, for profound
Were the impressions the command had made.

Oft he essay'd to leave the lonely spot,
But by an unseen power he was enchain'd;
His wishes wander'd, whither he knew not,
So there with deep emotion he remain'd!

When presently, a most unnatural light
Encircled him—unearthly sounds he heard—
For then the solemn stillness of the night
Was suddenly with moaning voices stirr'd.

He saw no thing of earth, nor did his feet
Appear the mould to touch—as if upborne
Through the surrounding air, he rose to greet
Some unknown region, or celestial morn.

And then sweet shadowy wings, with golden tips,
Approach'd him with a misty angel form;
The word "DEPART" was utter'd by those lips,
And then around him raged a fearful storm.

The heav'nly vision melted into air,
And Seleth found himself again below;
But flying fiery balls were passing where
The pathway seemed marked out for him to go.

He follow'd, and a streak of ruddy light,
With lurid glare, now ran across the sky;
Hush'd were the winds, but mutt'ring to the night
The distant voice of thunder roll'd on high.

He stay'd his steps, he strain'd his eyes to see
Whither he stray'd, and loudly throbbed his heart:
"Santa Maria!" cried he, "comfort me!"
Again he thought he heard the word "Depart!"

On, on he walk'd, the solitary way;
Weary at length he sat him down to rest;
His eyelids clos'd in sleep, but visions lay
Upon his brain—so strange, so bright, so blest,—

That all his fear and trembling pass'd away;
For such a glorious sunshine fell around
That roll'd the darkness back, and sweetest day
Was ushered in with spirit-stirring sound.

Sweet music fell upon his ravish'd ear,
And faces wond'rous bright, and happy mien,
Revived and faded—distant now, now near,—
And love encircled the enchanted scene.

The light grew dim, as when a passing cloud
Obscures the shining of the golden sun;
The music nearer came in cadence loud,
Then sunk to silence, as the song was done.

And presently before his vision rose
A beauteous valley, near a river's side;
Where PEACE held sovereignty in sweet repose,
And nature revelled in her gayest pride.

Then dreamy shadows came across his sight,
Uncertain beings flitting here and there;
His eyes he opened, but it still was night;
He rose to travel, still he knew not where.

PART II.

The rosy morning woke, and early smiles
Hung on her features with enchanting grace;
With eager footsteps, miles on weary miles
The shepherd urged him with unslacken'd pace.

The morn that lighted up each fleecy cloud,
And kindly flung her splendour o'er the earth,
Dancing with gladness where the waters loud
Plunged headlong with a brawling, giddy mirth;—

That heard the foresters their matins pour;
That looked on trembling leaves on bush and tree;
That strew'd with early flowers the landscape o'er,
And bade all nature hold a jubilee—

That morning pass'd away, and noon grew high,
Then sunk the sun into the distant west;
And then the melancholy wings flew by,
That veil the canopy while mortals rest.

Yet on the pilgrim pass'd, with weary feet,
But joy subdued was lighting up his face;
His heart with strong and strange emotions beat;
He lingered often, broken was his pace.

At length he came upon a lovely vale,
Where Aire's fair glistening stream was rolling by;
The woods in whispers told a sweet, sad tale,
Of holy peace and blessed harmony.

The shepherd bent his footsteps to a plain,
With grasses green and pretty daisies bright;
He sat him down to rest, and soon a train
Of vagrant forms came gently o'er his sight:

For sleep had set her fingers on his eyes,
As dimly night was creeping up aloft;
And hanging in festoons the curtain'd skies,
Holding the moonlight back in thraldom soft.

"Seleth!"—the shepherd thought he heard the name,
'Twas the same voice that erst had said, "Depart!"
And sudden awe ran through his weary frame,
And on his feet he stood with quailing heart.

He thought this was the place that met his view
Revealed in vision, beautiful and gay;
But envious clouds hung heavy, and he knew
Not what to do, until the voice said—"Stay!"

He thought 'twas holy ground, and on his knees
That night he spent in penitence and pray'r,
And when the leaves moved with the gentle breeze,
He thought some angel or some spirit there.

With his own hands a simple house he rear'd,
And roots and berries him supplied with food;
No cares invaded him, and nought he fear'd—
Holding converse with heaven alone he stood.

But others join'd him soon, yet whether brought
By some kind angel hither, no one knows;
But certainly companionship they sought,
And spent their time just where the Aire still flows.

Withdrawn from worldly men, with careful minds
They worship here uninterrupted—free
From those encroachments which one always finds
Surround the busy paths of industry.

While we admire, we blame the stern recluse,
For many evils follow in his track;
'Tis not religion but its sad abuse,
That makes us glad those days come never back.

Yet from the grand old darkness light has come;
'Twas the dim pathway to a height sublime;
If some were ignorant and gross, yet some
Pour'd blessings forth upon the tide of time.

The way at first was dreamy—then a zeal,
Where knowledge had small influence, arose;
And though strange facts the Chronicles reveal,
To rev'rend thoughts the times may well dispose.

These were the days of tumult and of war,
When Briton's sons against their brothers stood,
Stirr'd by internal strife and mortal jar,
To slake their vengeance in each other's blood;

When Bishops took the field in fierce array,
And led their flocks in troops to deeds of death;
Pronouncing absolution by the way,
Disarmed of fear that they may yield their breath,

Should chance of battle summons them away,
Nor think Salvation difficult to gain;
'Twas easy passage to a glorious day,
Just as though heaven were glad to get the slain!

We shudder as we look upon the deeds—
Foul deeds—performed by men who stand as guides;
And mourn that man, in holy office needs
A golden veil, iniquity that hides.

Yet onward move the wheels of Providence;
If man is blind, these wheels are full of eyes;
These make no motions false—they cannot—since
Omniscient energy within them lies.

PART III.

De Lacy now is sick, and nigh to death—
A load of guilt lies heavy on his soul;
He pants and writhes in agony—his breath
Is short, and life is hasting to the goal.

Oh, call a priest! before the fatal blow
Shall sever from the clay the parting life;
The feeble pulse grows fainter—sad and slow
Is the approach that threatens mortal strife.

He makes a vow—'tis made in view of death;
And he has wealth, and can the means command:
"Santa Maria!—now preserve my breath,
I'll build an Abbey!"—and he rais'd his hand

In supplication, and his heart felt ease;
Back through his veins came health, and when he saw
How flew the shadow that oppress'd his days;
His heart was overwhelm'd with holy awe.

The vow was made—with it he purchas'd life !
So said the priest, and so the people thought ;
Awe-struck stood ignorance ; though war and strife
Were rampant, men at this decision caught—

What if war raged, what tho' the warriors fell,
And bloody death with devastation reign'd ?
The ghostly fathers shut the gates of hell ;
The faithful dead had heavenly comfort gain'd !

Ye kings and mighty ones, why tremble ye
Before these men, or wherefore fear their frown ?
Ye know the priesthood wield the sovereignty—
They raise you, and at will they cast you down !

They give the law its force, withstand its pow'r,
Make and unmake as to them seemeth good ;
In chains of iron they hold the prime and flow'r
Of human kind—a prostrate brotherhood !

Hence at their bidding fabrics grand are rear'd,
With gothic arches, battlements, and towers ;
They spare no labour—no expense is spared,
For treasure comes profuse in golden showers.

And now De Lacy's wealth was at their feet,
For the Cistercian Order—Dedicate
Unto the blessed Virgin—Incense sweet
Shall rise to Heav'n and reach her Queenly state.

At Bernoldswic Saint Mary's mount is still,
Which then to Alexander was assigned;
Who brought from Fountains to attend his will,
Both monks and converts with a willing mind.

There holy Abbot and attendants felt
The wintry blast—their hearts were filled with care;
No pray'rs of theirs the ice and snow could melt,
And bloody war was raging round them there.

Long time they battled with stern nature's laws,
And months of cold and hunger brought despair;
Into his cell each tremblingly withdraws,
Each casts himself upon the Virgin's care.

They pray'd and fasted long (as fast they will
Who have no food); at length deliverance came,
As darkness brooding over dale and hill,
Disperses when the sun sends forth his flame.

The monks, in guise of pure and holy men,
Had frailty still—'tis common mortals' lot!
They lighted not the darkness brooding then,
O'er noble halls and labour's lowly cot.

Nor mov'd with pity for the wand'ring sheep,
Nor having heav'nly charity at heart,
Bade IGNORANCE their sanctity to keep,
While foul injustice wrought a tyrant part.

The gloomy Abbot wander'd from the scene,
His thoughts were deep, and solemn was his face;
And now what troubles on his heart had been,
Found vent in sighs—he said a pray'r for grace!

At length he reach'd the waters of the Aire,
Musing he wandered by the crystal stream;
Felt deep devotion well might harbour there,
And ecstacy indulge her fever'd dream.

Soft evening zephyrs fann'd the leafy trees,
As rising from the bosom of the flood;
Vigour and health accompanied the breeze,
And mystic whispers said, "The House of God!"

A little onward, and the lowly hut
Of some recluse, some Anchorite was built;
Some devotee from whose drear heart was shut
The world, its fascinations, and its guilt.

"Sancta Maria!" cried the Abbot then,
"Can this fair place belong to common earth?
No habitation this for worldly men,
Here saintly thoughts and sanctity have birth!"

Forth came the hermit from his lonely cell,
His hoary locks and reverend form of speech,
And sackcloth garment, all combin'd to tell
What height sublime humility can reach.

"Now tell me," said the Abbot, "tell me true,
In holy Mary's name I thee conjure,
And all the saints who hold this place in view,
What deadly sins, what evils would'st thou cure?"

"Nay," said the hermit, "I have long been here,
Directed by the visions of the night;
I left the world, and all its show and care,
And far I wander'd, still I wander'd right.

"My pilgrimage was many weary days,
But heaven directed, and I wandered on
Across the bleak untrodden moorland ways—
No other feet have been where these have gone.

I was a shepherd, as in time of old,
When sweetest music floated o'er the plain
Near Bethlehem—'tis truth that I have told—
These strains so strange came back to earth again.

"And since my weary feet this spot have found,
A band of holy brethren with me rest;
Now Father, bless us—this is holy ground—
No priest have we, and we would be confess'd."

"Sancta Maria! let the brethren come,
'Tis certain God has led me to this place;
This is your sin, you long have made a home
Without a priest, to bring your spirits grace."

Long time the hermit and the priest convers'd,
And all the Anchorites drew near to hear;
And each with reverence then his tale rehears'd,
And often to the ground there fell a tear!

(And where each tear-drop fell there sprung a flow'r,
Which nightly flung its fragrance on the breeze;
And softest music at the midnight hour,
Breath'd strains that waken'd heav'nly ecstacies.)

For each had something solemn to relate,
One soul was tainted deep with deadly sin;
And one the holy saints would emulate—
Thus sat they till the night had shut them in.

"Here," said the priest, "you live like erring sheep,
No shepherd's voice is heard within the fold;
No watchers here your souls from sin to keep,
Or keep the holy fires from growing cold.

"Know that the holy Virgin's pity wakes,
And your devotion truly she receives;
But while she at your hands your homage takes,
Your care to holy Mother Church she leaves!"

He ceas'd—the canopy of heav'n appear'd
As suddenly lit up with holy light:
Dimly a cross before them was uprear'd,
Then faded in the darkness of the night.

The softly murmuring waters of the Aire,
Seem'd holding converse with the gentle breeze;
The trembling leaves seem'd whispering of care,
And now and then a moan came from the trees.

Held were they in a deep and solemn spell,
As though th' invisible pass'd o'er the place;
Together then on bended knees they fell,
And said a pray'r, and ask'd for heav'nly grace.

And when the morning flew across the east,
And shook its wings o'er crystal drops of dew;
And tremulous the matin music ceas'd,
And words of blessing said, the priest withdrew.

The peaceful place hung on his fancy, dress'd
With nature's bounties, and a heav'nly light
Upon the favor'd landscape seem'd to rest—
His memory burn'd with musings of that night.

PART IV.

Straight to De Lacy Alexander flew,—
Told of the cares he and his monks endured,
And that by revelations now, he knew
Where Mary's honor could be well secured.

To William Pictavensis Lacy then,
With eager haste, and full of burning zeal,
Applied; for there were earnest spirits, when
The Church declared 'twas for the common weal.

The grant was made in perpetuity—
The *ground*, the *crystal water's* flowing flood
That rippled onward, flowing to the sea,
And all the trees of the adjoining wood.

The means of building being all at hand,
Some clear'd the ground, some shap'd the goodly trees,
Some opening to the bowels of the land
Rifted the solid rocks with wond'rous ease.

Some planed the wood, some cut the gritty stone,
And some did polish for the columns tall—
Some made cement, for industry alone
Prepared the work, and built the pond'rous wall.

Thus were the church and dormitories rais'd,
Thus cloisters, chapter-house, refectory,
And office after office. All were prais'd
This to achieve, who plied their industry.

And now with solemn pomp, far other sounds
Within this new built edifice arise;
The priestly pageant moves, the hymn resounds—
The spell of consecration o'er it lies.

The weird-like resonance of evening bells
Hie from that tower in music most sublime;
And echo, over streams, and hills, and dells,
Plays sweetly with the fleeting sands of time.

The sands of time still run—they will not stay,
Not for entreaty, not for glittering gold;
And Alexander nature's debt must pay,
And soon De Lacy's days of life are told.

De Lacy's tomb in Kirkstall Abbey was,
He rested in the place his zeal had built;
For none can set aside old nature's laws,
The pure in heart, nor heart oppress'd with guilt.

But day and night a lamp is kept alive
Before the altar of this holy place;
And prayers are said that he may soon arrive
From nether fires, to peace in heavenly grace.

Old Seleth, too, had found a place to rest
His bones in peace upon that sacred spot;
And those who from his holy lips were blest,
Came to the house of pray'r, but found him not.

For many were the miracles he wrought,
And flocks on flocks had bless'd him for his care;
They mourn'd that up to heav'n his soul was caught,
And nothing but his dust remaining there.

The hand of time hath smooth'd his humble grave,
And long his resting place has been unknown;
But still he sleepeth when the wild winds rave,
And when the flowers adorn the vernal throne.

But when the silent moon peeps through the screen
Of heavy clouds that oft conceals her face,
'Tis said that misty forms of light are seen
Ling'ring around the pilgrim's resting place.

More darkly gather now the folds of night,
That curtain o'er the *mental* canopy;
The dismal mists of ignorance affright
With filthy forms, not hid, but hard to see.

And as we travel down the valley deep,
Where darkness gross and superstitions dwell;
Where conscience is extinguished or asleep,
We enter the domains of death and hell.

Quiet at first, no objects meet the view,
Then dulcet music falls upon the ear;
Ecstatic, melting—wak'ning pleasures new—
Intoxicates the senses, drowning care.

Onwards we go as in a pleasant dream,
Here beauty sparkles, charming sights arise;
Voluptuous female forms fair angels seem—
Such witchery falls on the bewilder'd eyes.

Goblets of sparkling wine succeed to these—
Succeed and mingle in the magic scene,
And couches draped with luxury to please
The charm'd, excited senses, now are seen.

And as the heart becomes surcharg'd at length,
And fears the spell-bound spirit will affright;
As wild enjoyment saps his waning strength,
The priest appears to set such matters right.

Indulgences are granted by the church,
Confess—the priest can absolution give;
Bring gold—the world for pleasures ye may search,
And safe in luxury and riot live.

But worship Saints, and fast on holy days,
And never dare dispute our priestly power:
It is not good the world should scan our ways,
For we are holy—holy every hour.

Sometimes the soul requires another course
To free itself from deep and deadly sin;
And penance comes, which, linked with deep remorse,
Will quiet keep the voice—the heart within.

Such the belief inculcated; and such
The darkness whose dense wings spread o'er the land:
Men trembled priestly arrogance to touch,
For withering curses well they knew at hand.

Denunciations from the Vatican,
Against all sinners who should dare molest
The Monks of Kirkstall, thro' the kingdom ran;
They were condemned—unrighteous and unbless'd.

The Abbots lived in almost royal state
When fortune smil'd—but now a cloud arose—
Mowbray, a feudal lord, had nurtur'd hate
Against the Monarch, and the two were foes.

And in the strife the Monks, expell'd from lands
They were enjoying, on their Abbot turn'd—
"Upon the brink of ruin," cried they, "stands
Our house!" and vengeance in their spirits burn'd.

Disorderly—refractory—distress'd—
To other monast'ries they flew for aid;
But no compunction wrought they in the breast
Of the stern king, although they *feign'd* and *pray'd*.

Back came they to the Abbey, in the pride
And arrogance of priestly power—unbow'd—
The foul pretences calmly threw aside,
And all the claims of holy church avow'd.

With cruel hearts they banished from their lands,
The tenants of estates within their pow'r;
And any daring question their commands,
Found their account, alas, in evil hour.

PART V.

Alas, when ministers from truth withdraw,
And set themselves upon the throne of God,
Put superstitious rites in place of law;
They lead the people in a dubious road.

So now the Monks were ignorant, and sin
Unblushing flaunted in the face of day—
For errors that within the Church begin,
Grow to proportions monstrous. Hear them say—

It was the devil who oppos'd their will,
And those who acted were the devil's friends;
Hence, 'tis a virtue *piously to kill*
Such miscreants, and rid the world of fiends,

They wore the garb of sanctity, the show
Of holiness obtruded on the sight;
Proclaimed that each was to the Church a foe,
Who should suggest the Priest might not be right.

They bound the soul with fetters strong as brass—
Where they forbade no help the people dared;
Hell and destruction, fearful bolts, alas!
Were theirs to wield, and not a foe was spared.

They fasted much within the Abbey walls,
Whole days and nights upon their knees they spent;
Pretended to be deaf to nature's calls,
Ascetics, under chosen banishment.

Some were confined to cells for weary years,
To gain a passage to a world of peace;
A heav'n to purchase with their briny tears,
And make the pangs of purgatory cease.

One man arose of holy memory,
With many stripes upon his body laid;
With miserable sackcloth cloth'd was he,
To check the motions of the flesh 'tis said.

He yields not to the burning summer heat,
He shrinks not from the fearful wintry cold;
The ardour of his inner-man so great,
That he became of an ethereal mould.

And yet he weeps, compunction at his heart,
Wide opens up the flood-gates of his tears;
And in devotion when he takes his part,
Before the altar weeping he appears.

His tears fall on his vestments, dropping fast,
Such wond'rous power is given him to weep;
So lacrymose he grows, that he at last
Nursing his tears neglects his monks and sheep.

Disorder soon ensued, for government
Within the sacred precints there was none,
Disorder generated discontent,
And much they wish'd the weeping Abbot gone.

Then rose a spirit of superior skill,
Prosperity upon whose rule was seen,
He moulded savage natures to his will,
And order dwelt were its reverse had been.

Yet o'er the world time works out many a change.
Slowly sometimes but surely changes come;
Events occur, and circumstances strange,
Which wordly power cannot deliver from.

And here foul blots of sin with folly dwelt,
As darkness gather'd on the hoary tower;
A moral pestilential night was felt,
And guilt stood blameless in that sickening hour.

It was not frailty common to our race,
Not simply error from the way of life,
Nor impudence with its unblushing face,
Nor open violence engendering strife.

But those who should be guardians of our sons,
Instructors of our daughters and our wives;
Holy in word and deed—these priestly ones,
Led most immoral and injurious lives.

Oh, if these stones had tongues, how would they speak
Of incest and adulterous intercourse,
By men who took advantage of the weak,
And broke God's holy law without remorse.

In the habiliments prescribed and worn
As badges of the holy and the good,
Deeds only worthy of eternal scorn,
Disgrace the annals of the brotherhood.

The days of darkest ignorance were then ;
The Priest was thought to hold the key of heaven ;
He shut it as he listed, and again,
He open'd and declared their sins forgiven.

Moreover, men were held as by a charm,
These holy, awful beings had recourse
To whatso'er could generate alarm,
And nature from her channels they could force.

All foul diseases they could conjure up ;
All pains and mis'ries to the body bring ;
They might present to life a poison'd cup,
And plagues at their command came on the wing.

Within their hands they held the book of fate,
And if they would, might turn the folded leaves ;
The very dead their secrets would relate ;
What priestly aid requires, their art achieves.

They could call back the past,—the present scan ;
Nor could the future from their ken be hid ;
And "Do thou this!" the stern commandment ran,
Not what the Bible but the priest has bid.

They held the spirit of the baby dead,
Not wash'd in sacramental water, lost ;
Men trembled as the *ignis fatuus* sped
Through the deep darkness, and their pathway cross'd;

For these were infant spirits in unrest,
From grave yards rising as the night advanced—
Those whom no priestly holy hands had blest,
And heaven therefore never countenanced.

If other spirits through the night were seen,
Whatever their appearance or their form—
On whatsoever errand they had been,
In envious spite or admonition warm,—

They fled these ghostly men, as if afraid,
And baffled to their habitation went,
When pray'rful incantations had been said—
Nor left again the world to which they sent ;—

Devils themselves were subject to their word,
If devils dared to visit holy ground ;
And Satan has appeared before the Lord,
And oft in holy Abbeys he was found.

But these exorcists sent him down to hell,
Such periods as their priestly wisdom chose ;
How he escaped again we need not tell,
But he did not regard them as his foes.

By them all ignorance did propagate,
And superstitions hard to be believ'd ;
And foul acts too indecent to relate—
Could angels weep, they o'er them would have griev'd.

Still there were some who mortified the flesh,
And spent much time in penitence and pray'r ;
And if their evil feelings rose afresh,
Did voluntary scourging often bear.

Some knelt so long, insensible they grew
To common feelings of humanity ;
From worldly fascinations they withdrew,
Regarding earthly things as vanity.

And some were bent on doing kindly deeds—
The weary traveller might here find rest :
One clothes the naked, one the hungry feeds,
And many feel within these precincts blest.

PART VI.

As Jacob's favour'd sons in days of old,
T' escape red vengeance at th' avenger's hand,
Like lightning ran with efforts manifold,
Till in the Refuge City safe they stand.

The man of blood who by the laws pursued,
Within these shelt'ring walls protection found;
With cowl and cassock cloth'd, his sins subdued,
Might live in safety on this holy ground.

For each the oath of secrecy had sworn—
Invi'late the confessional was held:
And deadly sins that made the heart forlorn,
And every agonising fear, were quell'd.

There is a charm about these ruin'd cells,
What we regret we cannot but admire;
Where such self-sacrifice and kindness dwells,
Would there had never been unholy fire!

But all was wrong—for heav'n cannot be bought
With gold, nor pray'rs, nor tears, nor scourgèd backs;
He who the Saviour's spirit has not caught,
Whate'er his zeal, he true religion lacks.

Besides, the priests the key of knowledge held,
The learning of the times was theirs alone;
The mental darkness should have been dispell'd,
If the TRUE LIGHT had on their spirits shone.

They held the Bible—but the sacred book
They neither knew, nor wished to understand—
From it their counsel scarcely ever took,
The light itself was darkness in their hand.

Hence in their ministrations all was show,
Deep spirit-truth could not a favor find;
The shepherds could not lead their flocks to know
Where food abounded for th' immortal mind.

They held salvation easily obtained
By outward acts—a visit to the church
On certain holy days, they stated, gained
The grace for which the weary spirits search.

Licentiousness to superstition join'd,
Presided often over solemn rites
Of highest, holiest import; and purloin'd
The living fires, yet burned the waxen lights.

But retribution sleepeth not!—The Hand
That holds the universe is not unnerv'd:
A thousand instruments of vengeance stand
Ready in view by whom He will be serv'd.

Such agents as He pleases He employs,
And none can say to Him, "*What doest thou?*"
Of kings and princes He the pow'r destroys,
And priestly pride falls trembling, forced to bow.

Their dread anathemas whose thunders made
The nations tremble once, are harmless now;
For priestly power retires beneath the shade,
While clouds have gather'd round its aged brow.

The old monastic order is dissolved;
The property stands forfeit to the Crown:
Such change is in the stern decree involved,
That this old Abbey's roof is taken down.

And those old bells that charm'd the evening hour,
And flung their music sweet across the Aire,
And sweeten'd lovers' tales with magic power,
And sooth'd full many a bosom doom'd to care—

Have ceas'd their murmurs, and the ruin'd place
Is lone and drear, disconsolate and dark ;
A widow of her children reft, whose face
Bears desolation's unmistaken mark.

The hand of Man hath done some mischief since
To these old walls—but more the hand of Time,
That tumbled headlong from its eminence
Some of the loosen'd tow'r with crash sublime.

The Aire still rolls her waters to the sea,
The woods still flourish, tho' less numerous grown ;
And edifices raised for industry
Have o'er the landscape modern aspects thrown.

Such changes Time has wrought, that common ground
Claims from the multitude as much regard—
Though generations past their rest have found,
And sleep in peace within the old grave yard.

Oh, look with reverence on this ancient pile—
Whatever sins were perpetrated here—
Remember, many have felt heaven's smile,
While here they worshipp'd in the house of pray'r.

And when the sun sinks in the distant west,
And golden tints upon the clouds are cast ;
Oh, think what souls have entered into rest,
And robed in glory we shall meet at last.

PART VII.

Time—Early Morning.

The stars that through the live-long night have shone
 Are fading from the fascinated eye ;
Their twinkling lights grow dim, and one by one
 They melt away into the azure sky.

And brilliant Venus, like a splendid gem,
 At length appears with undivided sway ;
The sapphire host is gone—the queen of them
 Sits on her throne to usher in the day.

And now the vaulted roof above my head
 As a void, fathomless profound appears ;
The starry dust that angels' feet did tread,
 Is swept away as coming morning nears.

I look upon the earth, but all is dark—
 Objects are indistinct, or dimly seen ;—
Or if the eye some vagrant features mark,
 They mock the view with changeful, monstrous mien.

There seems to stand one of the brotherhood,
Anon another walks in yonder court ;
Their presence deeper makes the solitude,
In these their ancient places of resort.

The wakeful cock proclaims the morning hour,
His clarion shrill is sounding joyously ;
And murky darkness softly loses pow'r,
As orient rays are struggling to be free.

In solitary grandeur these old walls
Peep through the gloom, emerging into light ;
And strangely on the vision, weird-like falls
The mighty image of the broken height.

It seems as if 'twere playing with the mist,
That densely hovers 'round its rev'rend head ;
As clouds the dim grey streaks of light resist,
A pall seems hanging o'er the ground I tread.

But golden gleams of glory now appear,
And softly creep along the eastern sky ;
The joyous king of day is drawing near,
These are his heralds coursing up on high.

Distant th' horizon lies in wavy line,
Bathing delicious in the orient light ;
Nymphs. näiads, gods, and goddesses divine,
Of Grecian poësy, come back to sight.

Then streams of flashing light, a perfect blaze
Fling out their splendours—like a furnace huge
Of gleaming, glowing, burning gold—with rays
Like heav'n—th' Almighty throne the centrifuge.

What wonder that the Persian bow'd in prayer
At this glad hour, in days that long have pass'd—
As on his hills he quaff'd the bracing air,
Cool and refreshing in this temple vast ?

Aurora now ascends the steepy height
With fleecy vestments, broider'd rich with gold ;
On all she flings exhilirating light,
Through heav'n and earth, with blessings manifold.

The burnish'd glare falls on the silent flood,
That slowly moves between the banks of green ;
The sky is all reversed, as if it stood
Making ablutions ere it would be seen.

Then bright, unveil'd, and clear, with laughing face,
In virgin beauty gay, the morn is dress'd ;
The twittering birds come from their hiding place,
Mountains, and floods, and hills, and dales are bless'd.

For teeming life is early on the wing,
And music warbles sweet from bush and tree ;
The larks mount up, and as they mount they sing—
Morning has fill'd the air with harmony.

Around the dew drops hang on leaf and flow'r—
These on the head of nature form a crown
Of sparkling gems—and on the morning hour
Throw light prismatic—nothing wears a frown.

The graceful trees receive the welcome light
With quiet gladness, nodding out content ;
And in the lovely streams so smooth and bright,
The very fishes to their joys give vent.

The frisking lambs upon the sward at play,
Are emblems fair of innocent delight ;
And humming bees that hie them on their way,
Help to roll off the heaviness of night.

The sons of toil shake off their slumbers now,
And to their labour go with willing mind ;
Inebriation rubs its fever'd brow—
The wages of its yesterday to find !

Now all is busy—in the bustling mill,
The clang of moving wheels, the hiss of steam ;
And thousand hands the task assign'd fulfil,
Incredible almost as fairy dream.

Along the roadways pass the heavy wains,
The steady teams trudge onward with their loads ;
While o'er their necks are flung the useless reins,
For they know well the usage of the roads.

Some in the fields are turning up the sods,
While others make the growing crops their care ;
For wicker work some peel the gather'd rods,
And boys are up, the pilfering birds to scare.

Thus all are working—as the hours run on
Each tries to seize his opportunity,
Nor be regretful when the day is gone,
That unimproved he let the moments flee.

Around me evidence lies everywhere
Of human triumphs over things inert;
The bosom of the smooth canal is there,
Where boats glide on, nor storms their course divert.

On either hand the locomotives fly,
Those iron monsters fed with fiery food—
That rushing, whistling, screaming, hissing by,
Form chariot-horses for the neighbourhood.

These have infring'd upon the silent spot,
Where grand in ruins stands the Abbey wall;
The ancient solemn music is forgot,
For here no chiming bells to worship call.

The mill stood here in which the corn was ground,
That erst supplied the inmates of the place;
And still the ancient watercourse is found,
Through which the sparkling liquid ran apace,—

Dash'd o'er the water-wheel, with noisy glee,
Foaming and boiling with a splashing sound—
Then pass'd to holier precincts solemnly,
Welcome and useful to the inmates found.

The glory is departed!—Though the sun
Looks on this lovely spot right brilliantly—
Through its allotted time its course has run,
Its former grandeur none shall ever see!

Within the roofless walls huge trees have grown,
And other walls are ras'd, e'en to the ground—
Alas, for Kirkstall Abbey overthrown!
All desolate thy ruins lie around!

Thy mould'ring rooms are damp and useless now,
Except to raise involuntary sighs;
And where thy sons perform'd each solemn vow,
Feet tread unblest, and stare all vulgar eyes.

The ivy casts her arms around thy form,
As though she'd shelter from the rudest blast—
And spare thee from the angry raging storm,
Which must destroy thy tottering age at last!

Still thou art strong, and still sublime in age—
And as those columns meet the wond'ring eye,
We ask what cunning workers did engage
Those stones to shape, and rear thy head on high?

Their tale is left untold—and yet on thee
They stamp'd their genius with such mighty skill :
Thou dost impress with immortality
Their memory—though their names are hidden still.

But where are now the feet that often trod
With rev'rence deep these consecrated shades—
That came with humble hearts to worship God,
O'er hills, through dales, and sweetest sylvan glades ?

These generations all have sunk to rest,
Their bones long since have fallen to decay—
A quiet place upon the mother's breast,
Has been assign'd them till the judgment day !

And other generations came and went—
For ever moving is the changeful scene :
The blooming youth is soon with winter bent—
Earth closes o'er him, and again is green !

Still grows the grass, and Aire still onward flows,
Though changes came to man as ages pass'd :
Still men will rise—as former men arose—
When we, our course fulfill'd, have breath'd our last !

But know! there comes another glorious day—
The angel's trump shall summon us on high!
The frighted grave shall vomit forth its prey—
The sea yield up the dead that in her lie!

Then, when all human works to ruin fall,
When blazing fires shall purge the reeking earth—
Henceforth shall Christ in God be All in All,
And hell shall groan, and heaven be full of mirth!

Give us, ETERNAL, entrance with the blest—
Give us a sweet inheritance in heaven:
Give us—oh, give us everlasting rest—
Give love undying—be our sins forgiven!

HISTORY OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever!" This is true, whether we view some specimen of beauty bearing all the marks of modern appliances and luxury springing from the perceptive genius of an individual, or the ancient monument of a massive and laborious age—whether coming through ages of accumulated experience, each age contributing to make up the finished model, or presenting a ruined crown on which the hoar of ages has gathered, contrasting in its greatness with the saucy looks of some dwarf of a twelve-month's old. Whatever be the form it wears, what purposes soever it has served or may still be serving, men love beauty—they must love it, *because it is beautiful.*

The various forms of the beautiful, however, cannot but produce sensations as varying as the aspects which they present to the mind; hence a lovely parterre and a moorland forest would call up a different train of ideas. The same may be said of a fruitful valley and a bleak and snow capped mountain, and equally so of a modern palace and the grim remains of some ancient lordly retreat. Yet each of these may be a thing of beauty. One thing may be beautiful in simplicity, another in its coloring, another in its grandeur, and another in decrepitude and decay. The fact of a want of appreciation in *us* alters not the claim of the object, and as the appreciative faculty is differently developed in different individuals, and some form of beauty appears to each, the world becomes full—studded over with quiet or sparkling

glory, so that, wherever we turn, the beautiful meets the eye, and seems to ask our attention that it may make us better! We should, therefore, occasionally put on our holiday clothes and sally forth to look on the face of nature; to see her modest smile, to mark how the flowers are glad for their day of being, to hear not only the joyous song of the dappled foresters, but the hum of the insect world; to behold how contentment rises into expressions of joy until the hills and dales, the trees, shrubs, and murmuring waters clap their hands in the general rejoicing! And if we meet with any of the works of man bespeaking either his greatness or his littleness, we may indulge in grave reflections, and take a leaf from the book of the past for our present instruction and future guidance. Everything around us is capable, if wisely read, of affording some important lesson; but, in general, our reading is too superficial to enable us to gather and *store* the deep and varied teachings that present themselves, and, with a supplicating aspect, ask our consideration.

It is to be regretted—not that we throw our hearts into the engagements of every day life; not that during business hours we become absorbed in it, for what is worth doing is worth doing well—but it is to be regretted that we too often carry the spirit engendered during those hours of bustle and excitement into our walks, our homes, and even our holidays, and thus shut up our hearts against influences of the most beneficent character, and teachings whose silent voices appeal in vain to our understandings and our hearts. This has become so universal and constant, that our very religion is tinged with the prevailing hue, and takes its coloring from our ideas, rather than doing as it should have done—subduing us to its pervading spirit, and moulding us to the model of its own glory. The religious feeling of the dark

ages was sombre and superstitious, but it was confiding and deep. Ours is utilitarian and uninspiring, although expansive and tolerant. That there are individuals to whom these remarks do not apply is readily admitted, but they are true of the masses of the people, and embrace even the majority in the higher walks of life. It is thus that life has lost the poetry which naturally belongs to it: the bloom on the peach and plum, if rudely touched, is brushed away, never to be replaced; so the joys which should bubble up, and sparkle like dew-drops in sunshine from our hearts to the surface of life, become suppressed by the cold calculating spirit of the age, and life becomes a race for money rather than for immortality—for wealth rather than its enjoyment.

As these remarks may probably reach the eyes of holiday-folk more frequently than others, it is hoped they may not be without effect—that, in fact, they may induce an effort to roll back the tide of business thoughts, and leave the heart free for rational and elevating pleasures; and, at the same time, assist the mind to gather the flowers and fruits which cluster around the history of the past, whose shadows are lengthened in the sunshine, and fall across the pathway of the present. With this view, we visit the old Abbey at Kirkstall; and, as we gaze upon the ponderous ruins, call up memories of the past, and try to peer through the darkness which ages have cast upon its features, leaving it still "a thing of beauty!"

Early in the eleventh century, Seleth, a shepherd living in the South of England, is said to have had certain visions and revelations, which called him to leave his home and settle in Airedale. The Holy Virgin appearing to him in the night, commanded him to "Arise, and go into the province of York, and search diligently in the valley of

Airedale for a place called Kirkstall, to prepare a future habitation for brethren serving her son!" That this is the product of some monkish brain in after-times can scarcely admit a doubt, apart from the consideration of the subject of visions: *Kirkstall*, in all probability, was a name given to the place after the building of the Abbey—the first name of which is said to have been Headinleia, or Headingley. In reference to the story of Seleth and the visions he is said to have had, it is sufficient to remark that in an age of mental darkness, when the religious element was fostered into the most monstrous development, and enthusiasm took the place of light and knowledge, it is not impossible to conceive that the fevered brain of a devotee should breed all sorts of dreamy but unreal intercourse with the world of spirits; while the mind, emaciated and nerveless, became incapable of detecting the fraud that it thus perpetrated upon itself. In this way numbers first imposed upon themselves, and then upon an ignorant world, which came to look for its information to visions and dreams of the night, while the truth of God was ignored, or regarded too holy for common eyes to look upon. This follows as a natural consequence from a state of society in which the leaders of the people, finding it to their advantage, have the will and the power to cause them to err—and, by a reflex action, these very leaders of the people may have come to believe a lie!

The founder of Kirkstall Abbey was Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. It appears that during a severe illness, when the approach of death was feared, he made a vow that if he recovered he would build an Abbey for the Cistercian order of Monks, in honor of the Virgin Mary. This is not only in accordance with the times in which he lived, but it marks tolerably distinctly the manner of life he had previously led—

the vow being a set-off against his sins. Having recovered, he assigned to the Abbot of Fountains (or Fountaynes), by charter, the village of Bernoldswick, as the fulfilment of his vow. In 1149, Alexander, the Prior of Fountains, was made Abbot of Bernoldswick, and, with twelve monks and ten lay brothers, took possession, and commenced the ecclesiastical establishment. One of the first acts of the Abbot was so unjust and tyrannical, that it is not to be wondered that the people regarded the community with disfavor: the rights of the church were encroached upon, and the church itself ordered to be pulled down. This being appealed against was carried to Rome, and the decision obtained in favor of the Monks, on the ground that a monastery would be of more service to the people than the Church. Having conferred the name of St. Mary's Mount upon the place, and settled a variety of preliminaries, they hoped for a quiet holding of what they had obtained; but in this they were doomed to disappointment. The Scots made incursions on their lands and carried off their provisions, and the seasons proved unfavourable to their crops; the soil was sterile and unproductive, and the brotherhood were reduced to a condition bordering upon starvation. In this state of things the Abbot, either by accident or wandering in search of a more favored spot, found his way to Airedale, where was settled a band of Anchorites, of whom Seleth was the head. This spot appeared to Alexander so desirable a site for the new Abbey, that he lost no time in laying the troubles of his fraternity before his patron, and entreated his assistance to obtain a grant from the owner of that part of Airedale inhabited by the hermits. This being complied with, and the application proving successful—William of Poitou granting the land in perpetuity to the Monks of St. Mary for five

marks a year—the hermits were induced, some to incorporate themselves with the new society, and others sold their title for money. In the year 1153, Bernoldswick was abandoned and turned into a farm for their use, and a magnificent Abbey commenced at Kirkstall. The stone found in abundance in the neighbourhood, was raised for the building. The patron, De Lacy, laid the foundation stone, supplied corn for the community, and money for the building; and in the space of thirty years, Alexander saw his desire fulfilled, and the Abbey completed. He presided over the monastery thirty-five years.

Henry de Lacy is said to have died towards the close of the reign of Henry II., and his remains were buried in the cemetery of Kirkstall. Pope Adeian, in 1156, ratified the arrangements of the community, bestowed upon them privileges and exemptions, and pronounced formal denunciations upon all who might molest them in their professions.

The second Abbot, Ralph Hageth, commenced his rule under a sunshine that soon became clouded with misfortune. The grange of Micklethwaite, which belonged to the Abbey, had been part of the fee of Roger de Mowbray, who, joining a party hostile to the King, Henry II. seized his fee, and expelled the monks: these became incensed against Ralph, on account of the loss which they accused him as having caused, and whose extravagance had brought them to the brink of ruin. In their distress the monks sought refuge in other monasteries, hoping thereby to work upon the king's compassion. The Abbot is said to have disposed of sacred utensils and ornaments to propitiate him; but the golden chalic, a manuscript copy of the gospel, entreaties and censures, alike failed to produce compunction, so the scattered Monks returned to their abbey to make the best of the disaster; and as Henry died without making restitution, it is said the

Monks held the opinion that he had no chance of redeeming his soul. Ralph was translated to Fountain's Abbey, where he died.

Under Lambert, the next Abbot, a gleam of prosperity soon became overcast, for the Grange of Clivacher was claimed from the monastery by Richard de Eland; this claim seems to have been well-founded, but the Abbot avoided its recognition, and finally secured compensation by resigning it into the hands of Roger de Lacy, who had recently given it, and who bestowed the village and park of Akarington upon the order, to make good his former gift. Immediately upon obtaining this property, Lambert removed the inhabitants, and converted it into a farm for the use of the monastery, under the charge of some lay-brothers; but the people who had been expelled from their habitations were aroused to revenge themselves—they burnt the grange and its furniture, and murdered three lay-brothers. The Abbot having commended the souls of the departed to God, applied to Robert de Lacy, who waxed wroth, and determined to banish the perpetrators and their families; but having appeased the Abbot by the most abject subjection, and the payment of a sum of money for the damage, a pardon was obtained from the irate nobleman. The Grange was rebuilt about 1192, and the Abbot died. Turgesius succeeded—an ascetic—he abstained from wine and animal food, chastised his body, clothed himself in sackcloth, to subdue unlawful motions of the flesh. In summer and winter he wore one cowl and one tunic; was almost continually weeping. He is said to have rained tears upon the holy vestments, so that after he had used them they could scarcely be used by any other. After presiding over the Abbey nine years, he removed to Fountains, and soon after died.

Helias, the next Abbot, was a man of business, who,

although many obstacles impeded him, brought the affairs of the society into order. After his death nothing is recorded of the condition of the Abbey for about one hundred years. The Abbots were Ralph de Newcastle, Walter, Maurice, Adam, Hugh Mikelay, Simon, William de Leedes, Gilbert de Cartles, who appears to have been deposed, or else to have resigned his abbacy after three years, one month, and four days. He was again created Abbot, and was succeeded by Henry Carr, after whom comes Hugh Grimstone.

When Hugh Grimstone came to the abbacy, the affairs of the society had sunk into a state of terrible embarrassment: the revenues were exhausted to pay interest upon debts which had been contracted, the foundation was in a state of insolvency, and the live stock upon the estates had been nearly consumed to meet the every day wants of the community; the creditors became impatient, and they were compelled to seek the king's aid (Edward I.) in their difficulty. By some deep intriguing and priestly expedients, however, these difficulties were got over. Enough information remains to show us that craft and cunning, under guise of religion, formed the principal links in the transaction, and some matters, the wily Abbot says, it would not be prudent to put upon paper; but well pleased with the success of the deception, he seems to laugh at his dupes, and requests that his letter be shown to no one, but that they should keep their own counsel secret from every one out of the bosom of the chapter.

After the death of Hugh Grimstone, the abbacy was conferred upon John de Bridesal, but we possess no information beyond this point except the names of the several Abbots. It seems that John had occasion to visit Canterbury, from which he wrote a letter "with many tears;" from this letter we learn there were many inconsistencies among the eccle-

siastics. The following is clearly to this point—"We wrote unto certain persons 'abstain from every appearance of evil, and avoid it beforehand; whatever is or can be pretended in its behalf, God shall give you the knowledge of these things.'"

Abbot Walker, Abbot William (1341), Roger de Leedes, John Thornberg, John de Bardsey, and William Grayson followed. Among the charters of the Cottonian Library the following has been discovered, which corresponds with the time of the last mentioned Abbot:—

"To all whom these presents may come, brother Robert, Abbot of the Monastery of the Blessed Mary at Kirkstall, health and faith in the following. Though by the institutes of our order the admission of women is prohibited under heavy penalties within the precincts of Cistercian Abbeys; we, nevertheless, being desirous of the salvation of souls, which undoubtedly will be obtained as well by women as by men, who in certain days in the year happen to visit the church of the said monastery of Kirkstall, and which visits, moreover, are clearly allowed in some indulgences granted by Pope Boniface the Ninth, we hereby tolerate, *pro tempore*, on the above mentioned days, the admission of women to the said church solely; provided, notwithstanding, that such females be not introduced into any other apartment within the confines of the said monastery, neither by the Abbots nor by any of the Monks, under the penalties awarded by the aforesaid ordinance, which penalties we by these presents decree, and without remission enforce, as well against the Abbot as the Monks of the aforesaid monastery, if they shall be found to transgress what is permitted them. Given at our monastery at Fountains, A.D. 1461." Dr. Whitaker conjectures from this letter that the Abbots of Fountains exercised a jurisdiction over those of Kirkstall. At any rate, we have proof

in this letter of two things—first, the immoral lives of the Monks, and secondly, the abominable superstition which taught that attendance on certain days at the church at Kirkstall ensured salvation. Language cannot too strongly express detestation of such modes of life, and such teachings.

The Abbots that make up the list are the following:—Thomas Wymbersley, 1468; Robert Kelynbeck. 1499; William Stockdale, 1501; William Marshall, 1506; and John Ripley, who surrendered the convent to the Crown November 22nd, 1540, in the 31st year of the reign of Henry VIII. The revenue at the time of dissolution is said to have been worth £10,000 of our money per annum. In addition to this, the cattle, corn, and other valuables, including plate and other kinds of property, must have amounted to a very large sum. This property, after passing through many hands, came into the possession of the Earls of Cardigan, who still hold it. Immediately after the dissolution, the work of destruction commenced. The tower, which contained a chime of bells, appears to have been built at a much later period than the other portions of the Abbey, and the roof appears to have been lowered at the same time. No evidence exists, that has come to our knowledge, as to the time when *the bells were placed in the Abbey*, but from the letters "W. M." on portions of the walls still standing, it has been supposed that the tower was an addition made during the abbacy of William Marshall, who was elected in 1509, for the purpose of receiving a peal of bells; but, supposing this to be so, there may have been, probably there were, bells previously there, and in that case, the peal may have been increased in number for the new tower. Be that as it may, they were taken down and sold; the roof was removed, and the lead and timber, from the church and other buildings, were disposed of for the benefit of the Crown.

Nor was this the only indignity that awaited the venerable pile, for according to an entry in the book of the Churchwardens of Leeds, in 1583, we find labourers were employed at sixpence a day, removing materials from "Christall Abbaye" for building purposes.

In 1741, an old granary was removed, the slate of which almost resembled steel, after being on the roof five hundred years. The dormitory fell during the winter of 1746; and two sides of the tower and a part of the third came down with a crash January 27th, 1779. Several smoking pipes were found in the mortar, which must have been used at a date anterior to tobacco being introduced into this country.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS.

Parts of the wall, which enclosed the Abbey and about thirty acres of land, are still standing; and the ruins are sufficiently perfect to allow of our determining, with almost positive exactness, the positions of the various parts of the building. The centre is the usual quadrangular court into which the various apartments opened; this formed the cemetery of the brotherhood and of the wealthy inhabitants in the neighbourhood; here grow apple trees and pear trees, whose blossoms and fruits wave during spring, summer, and autumn over the beautiful and well-kept grass, and in whose branches the wintry winds sigh with a melancholy dirge-like sound. This court was entirely surrounded by an ambulatory or penthouse cloister; here the Monks met for conversation and exercise. The nave of the church formed its north side; the eastern side was formed by the vestry, joined to the extremity of the south transept of the church, and continued

by the chapter-house and two or three smaller apartments or cells; above these was the dormitory for the Monks. On the south was the refectory, and adjoining it probably the common room, with possibly the library over it; and on the west side was a dormitory for lay-brothers on arches supported by columns, forming a covered way or ambulatory for the Monks. The building which stood at the southern end of this, and was carried westward, is apparently of uncertain character; some think it was the infirmary. Behind the refectory, southwards, were the kitchens, whose flues and ovens are still evident; in a direct line, east of these, is probably the Abbot's residence, and other conveniences connected therewith; and, north from the extremity of these, are remains lately uncovered, forming in all probability the hospitium or place for entertaining Priests and strangers. The hall formed a spacious apartment, measuring eighty-three feet in length, and forty-eight feet nine inches in breadth. Here are remaining four fire-places, hearths and stone fenders being attached to two of them. There is no difficulty in perceiving that some parts of the ruins belong to a different date, and are built of a different material from the original. In what we have mentioned as the apartments of the Abbot is the remains of a remarkable chimney, the back of the fire-place being built of flat stones, resembling tiles, placed in alternate rows diagonally, so as to form a pattern known as *herring-bone*. The watercourse was brought through the southern part of the building, so that every convenience for cleanliness was afforded.

The church, with its broken tower, is beautiful in ruins—the masses of matted ivy which cling to some parts of the old walls give it a sombre but impressive appearance, and the vast elm trees growing *within its walls* make it picturesque

in the extreme. The *workmanship* displayed in the building is of a high character. The great eastern window, with the high altar, must have been peculiarly imposing, and while yet the lamp burnt, for which De Lacy had provided, would exercise a mighty influence on the minds of the ignorant who went thither to worship. On either side of this were three chapels, with altars, but to what saints they were dedicated we have no means of knowing.

A short distance to the north-west of the Abbey may be seen the remains of the corn mill, which ground the grain for the fraternity. This was driven by water brought from a considerable distance, and having served this purpose, the stream was carried on to the kitchens, &c., for purposes already referred to.

In the walls of the chapter-house several stone coffins have been discovered, one of which was probably De Lacy's, but no inscription has been found sufficient to determine anything with certainty. All, in fact, is changed, and much of the past is irretrievably lost. The Abbey is no longer in a retired and solitary spot; everything has yielded to public utility, upon which these grim remains solemnly look, while they afford important lessons and warnings to all who pass by, and which it would be wise to learn. Beyond this, the discoveries of antiquities have been few and unimportant—a few tiles, some keys, one or two seals, partial inscriptions on a sepulchral slab, and a coffin of beaten iron, are the principal. But these ruins may stand for ages yet, and silently teach future generations lessons of high importance. The crumbling ruin is thus a present monitor.

The church does not stand due east and west. It is to be regretted that more regard has not been paid in the modern masonry, by which some parts of the building is supported,

to the style of the original; instead of this, the rough manner of execution seems almost to profane the venerable place, whose massive and beautiful columns stand like old giants peering upon us through the darkness and mystery of past generations. Here they stood, while the inmates passed through cold asceticism; here still, when voluptuousness and luxury were rampant; still here, now the dismantled tower is shorn of its glory.

Altogether, Kirkstall Abbey is a place to be remembered. The lessons it teaches are many and sublime, and few eyes can gaze upon the grandeur of decay exhibited in the sombre features and hoary dignity of these old ruins, without feeling the most solemn reflections taking possession of the breast, and shedding their influence over the heart.

GLOSSARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL TERMS.

Abbot, the governor of an abbey; in wealthy monasteries they claimed exemption from the Bishop.

Ambrie, a place where alms are placed for distribution to the poor. In ancient churches and cathedrals it was often in the form of a niche, or hollow space in the wall, with a door to it, and placed near the altar to contain the utensils belonging thereto. In some churches they were very numerous, and placed in various parts of the church and even in the cloisters.

Bishop, a spiritual superintendent or overseer.

Camerarius, or chamberlain, had the management of the dormitory, and furnished clothing to the society.

Cassock, a robe or gown worn over the other garments by the clergy.

Cells, religious houses, small close apartments. They served for the devotion of the recluse, as places of confinement for transgressors; and possibly, at times, after entombing the unhappy victim of priestly vengeance, they served him for a grave.

Cellerarius, a butler, one who obtained provisions for the convent, and had charge of the wine vault.

Chapter, a community of clergymen. A place where delinquents receive discipline and correction.

Chapter House, a house where a chapter meets.

Cloister, a close, a square between the church, chapter house, and refectory, and over which is the dormitory. The place where the monks met for conversation.

Cowl, a monk's hood, or habit, worn by the Bernardines or Benedictines; it was either black or white.

Dormitory, a gallery divided into small cells, where the *religieux* sleep.

Eleemosynarius, the almoner, who distributed alms to the poor at the gate of the monastery; sometimes he had the care of the maintenance and education of the choristers.

Historiographer, one whose duty it was to commit to writing the principal events that occurred, and at the end of the year made a digest of all the entries.

Hospitium, a house for entertaining the priests and distinguished visitors and strangers.

Infirmarius, one who attended the sick and provided medicine for the use of the establishment.

Magister Operis, the master of the works, who had the care of the buildings, and attended to their repairs.

Matins, morning worship, or service; morning prayers or songs.

Monk, a man who retires from the ordinary concerns of the world, and devotes himself to religion.

Piscina, a niche on the south side of the altar in Roman Catholic churches, containing a small basin and water drain, through which the priest emptied the water in which he had washed his hands, and also that in which the chalice had been rinsed.

Precentor, he who had the direction of the choir. He had the custody of the seal, kept the chapter book, and provided writing materials for the scribes, and colors for the limners, who illuminated the books in the library.

Prior, the office next below an Abbot.

Refectory, a room for refreshments.

Sacristan, a sexton, who had the care of the utensils or moveables of the church.

Sacristy, the apartment where the utensils and vestments are kept.

Scapulary, a vestment worn over the shoulders.

Scriptorium, a room where writers transcribed manuscripts.

Sedilia, stone seats used by the priests during high mass: they were in the south wall of the chancel, usually three in number, for the priest, deacon, and sub-deacon.

Thesaurarius, the treasurer who received all rents and revenues, and paid current expenses.

Vesica Piscis, a name given to a symbolical representation of Christ, made by the intersection of two equal circles, cutting each other in their centres, and consequently of an egg shape, or pointed oval form. The figure of a fish found on the sarcophagi of the early Christians, gave way to this ornament in the middle ages.

Vespers, the evening song, or evening service of the Romish church.

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